

Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 08060 290057Z

61

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /060 W

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P R 281024Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1298

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 8060

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, LA

SUBJ: RENEWED PATHET LAO FEARS OF COUP

1. FONMIN PHOUMI VONGVICHIT (PL) ASKED ME TO CALL TODAY AT 3:40 PM. I ARRIVED EARLY AND MET THAI AMBASSADOR AS HE WAS LEAVING. BRITISH AMBASSADOR WENT THIS MORNING. I HAVE NOT DISCUSSED WITH THEM THE DETAILS OF THEIR CONVERSATIONS, BUT I GATHER THE THEME WAS THE SAME: THE PL HAVE HEARD REPORTS OF A MILITARY COUP.

2. PHOUMI RECEIVED ME AFFABLY AS ALWAYS, AND IMMEDIATELY EXPLAINED THE PURPOSE OF THE CALL. THEY HAD INFORMATION THAT VIENTIANE-SIDE MILITARY WERE PREPARING A COUP TO BE HELD ON THE DAY OF THE THAT LUANG CEREMONIES (WHICH WILL BE ON WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30). HE SAID THAT ACCORDING TO HIS INFORMATION, "LES AMERICAINS" WERE INVOLVED. HE KNEW, AS SECRETARY HAD TOLD HIM, THAT
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PAGE 02 VIENTI 08060 290057Z

THE POLICY OF THE USG WAS TO SUPPORT THE PGNU AND ITS

POLICY. HE THEREFORE WANTED OUR ASSISTANCE TO CHECK ON THIS INFORMATION. IN PARTICULAR WERE WE SURE THERE WAS NO CIA INVOLVEMENT?

3. I ASKED HIM WHETHER HE HAD ANY SPECIFIC FACTS TO SUPPORT THIS GENERAL INFORMATION. HE SAID THE VIENTIANE-SIDE MILITARY HAD RECENTLY ENTERED THE CITY DISGUISED AS CIVILIANS AND HAD BEEN COMMUNICATING BY RADIOS; MILITARY HAD SURROUNDED VIENTIANE; AND INTERCEPTS OF MESSAGES SUBSTANTIATED INFORMATION.

4. I ANSWERED THAT I HAD BEEN HERE SIX MONTHS AND DURING THE FIRST FEW MONTHS HARDLY A WEEK WENT BY WITHOUT RUMORS OF COUPS. THIS WAS THE FIRST I HAD HEARD OF A NEW RUMOR IN A LONG TIME. I TOLD HIM I COULD REASSURE HIM CATEGORICALLY THAT NOT ONLY NO AMERICANS WERE INVOLVED IN COUP PLOTTING BUT ALSO THIS RUMOR WAS COMPLETE NEWS TO US. FURTHERMORE I SAID I COULD CATEGORICALLY REAFFIRM THAT SECRETARY AND AMBASSADOR HAD PREVIOUSLY SAID ON MANY OCCASIONS: USG POLICY WAS TO SUPPORT PGNU AND ITS POLICY.

5. PHOUMI ACCEPTED ALL THIS, BUT COMMENTED THAT THEY MUST REMAIN VIGILANT. LAST YEAR THERE WERE SIMILAR RUMORS, AND SIMILAR DENIALS, BUT THERE HAD NEVERTHELESS BEEN A COUP ATTEMPT. I RETORTED THAT NO ONE COULD GIVE IRON-CLAD ASSURANCES THAT SOME "FOU" MIGHT NOT TRY AGAIN, BUT AS FAR AS US CONCERNED, WE HAD HEARD NOTHING AND OUR POLICY, I FELT CONFIDENT, WAS KNOWN AND UNDERSTOOD BY ALL PRINCIPALS.

6. COMMENT: ONLY INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EXPLAIN THIS RENEWED FEAR IS THAT DURING ELECTRICITY STRIKE FAR BROUGHT SOME TROOPS INTO VIENTIANE TO PROTECT HOUSE OF ELECTRIC COMPANY DIRECTOR-GENERAL WHO WAS THREATENED AND SOME OTHERS TO PROTECT ELECTRIC STATION OVER 15KMS OUTSIDE CITY.
CHAPMAN

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NNN

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